

Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT)

WISE COUNTY/TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP WATER SHORTAGE

SITUATION REPORT # 35

1230 Hours November 30, 2005

New Information in Bold Italics

Information for Situation Report should be submitted to the VEOC no later than 1200 hours daily

SUMMARY

The town of Big Stone Gap continues to experience water shortages due to drought like conditions. Actions are being coordinated with surrounding communities and the state to alleviate the adverse conditions.

EXECUTIVE ACTION

EOC Activation: The Virginia EOC is at Increased Readiness condition and augmented with limited staffing.

State of Emergency: On October 7, 2005, Governor Mark R. Warner declared a state of emergency to exist for Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to assist these localities in responding to a critical water shortage. Governor Warner directed appropriate assistance be rendered by agencies of the state government to respond to needs in Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to alleviate adverse conditions created by the water shortage. Executive Order 99 (2005) was amended to include an Open Burning Ban on Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap.

Protective Actions: Local Emergency Declared: Wise County declared a local emergency on September 26, 2005.

WEATHER

Forecast: **Wednesday 30 November** – Sunny with a high near 45. Calm winds becoming west around 5 mph. The sky will remain mostly clear in the evening and lows will be around 25. **Thursday 1 December** – Mostly cloudy, high near 44 and west winds between 5 and 15 mph. A slight chance of snow showers (20%) will begin in the evening between 9 p.m. and midnight. Low temperature near 27 with west winds between 10 and 15 mph and gusts as high as 25 mph. **Friday 2 December** – Partly cloudy with a high near 41 and west winds around 10 mph. Gusts may be as high as 20 mph. Low temperatures in the evening will be around 31.

OPERATIONS SECTION

Local Liaison: VDEM Local Support Services Division Region Four Coordinator is assisting Wise County local officials.

EMERGENCY SERVICES BRANCH

ESF 4 – Firefighting: Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)
The VDOF has signs in place notifying residents of the burn ban.

ESF 8 – Health & Medical: Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
VDH continues monitoring absenteeism in Big Stone Gap schools; ***at this time, the absentee rate is lower than other county schools.*** No new cases of chickenpox

reported and VDH will continue monitoring chickenpox through the end of the incubation period on December 2, 2005. Environmental Health Specialist monitoring permitted food service establishments to ensure compliance with regulations and plans; ***no problems have been encountered***. Two sample kits are available to sample additional raw waters sources. ***VDH is compiling results from several sites, including mine water sources. As of yet, the unused/closed well systems in Appalachia, Virginia have not been tested due to lack of the electricity and operational pumps. Once electricity is restored and pumps are operational, the water will be tested. Linden Mine is still proving to be the best source of water. Radiological reports are still pending, but are expected to be in soon. VDH suggests getting a process in order for these alternative sites, in the event that the cave runs dry.***

ESF 13 - Public Safety & Security:

Virginia Department of Military Affairs/National Guard (VDMA/VNG)

The VNG continues the blivet support mission. Eleven blivets are in place. Ten soldiers currently on mission. ***Coordinated blivet removal schedule is as follows:***

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Bullitt Park (2)</i> | <i>To Be Determined (request for unlimited extension made)</i> |
| <i>Shelter-East Stone Gap (1)</i> | <i>Blivets can be removed at any time</i> |
| <i>Powell Valley Schools (3)</i> | <i>December 9, 2005</i> |
| <i>DMME and MECC (1)</i> | <i>December 13, 2005</i> |
| <i>Nursing Home (1)</i> | <i>December 14, 2005</i> |
| <i>Hospital (1)</i> | <i>December 15, 2005</i> |
| <i>Powell Cave Number 1 (2)</i> | <i>December 15, 2005</i> |

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT BRANCH

ESF 1 – Transportation:

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

VDOT has four message boards in the Big Stone Gap area and messages are being changed frequently so members of the community do not become complacent. A VDOT tractor is being used to pull stainless steel tankers of water.

LOGISTICS SECTION

ESF 7 – Resource Support:

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

The VEOC is coordinating requests for assistance from the locality and state agencies, and is facilitating conference calls with the locality and state agencies.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Current Powell River stream flow is ***55 cubic feet per second***. ***The water treatment plant produced 1.42 million gallons of water on November 29, 2005.*** Outdoor pumping operations have been winterized using shelters with heat to protect from freezing and all systems are being monitored 24/7. Vendor is making modifications to electric pump that was purchased by Big Stone Gap for cave pumping operations and expect to have pump installed 2 December. Big Stone Gap extended the leases for the portable water treatment plants through 10 January 2006 and purchased enough additional filter modules for the two portable plants to bring them up to maximum filtration capacity. ***The Incident Management Team met 29 November to discuss long-range plans to include the Dorchester water connection, a micro plant for Powell Cave Number 1, and the feasibility of raw water sources from the Linden Mine and Appalachia wells.***

There is no date set for the implementation of the Dorchester connection to the PSA, i.e. cost and completion time-line. This connection could supply approximately 250,000 gallons of water per day to Big Stone Gap. This would be at a minimal cost, due to above ground pipes between Norton and Big Stone Gap that can be reused. Norton and Appalachia continue to remain optimistic that they can continue to supply water to Big Stone Gap for at least the next 20-30 days. Norton, Appalachia, Lee County PSA, and Scott County PSA are contributing a total of 450,000 gallons of water per day to Big Stone Gap. Meters are located on the connection, prior to entering the Big Stone Gap system.

The Virginia Army National Guard continues to pump approximately 80,000-100,000 gallons of water per day from Powell Valley Cave Number 1. An electric pump is on order and should arrive this week.

Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC) continues to work with senior citizens who are considered at risk and low income to provide them with bottled water.

Prepared by: Michelle Pope
Authority of Michael Cline, State Coordinator
/s/ Al Pace, Deputy Operations Director